



Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-101

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Delay of relief implementation for area codes 403, 587, 780, and 825 in Alberta

*The Commission **approves** the Alberta relief planning committee's Task Identification Form Report #3, including the revised relief implementation plan and relief implementation schedule for area codes 403, 587, 780, and 825. In addition, the Commission **approves** the revised implementation date of 23 April 2022 for the new distributed overlay area code (368) for Alberta.*

Background

1. In [Telecom Decision 2019-130](#), the Commission determined that relief for area codes 403, 587, 780, and 825 in Alberta was to be provided by the implementation of a new distributed overlay area code (368),¹ effective 15 May 2021.
2. The Commission also approved a consensus report from the 403/587/780/825 relief planning committee (RPC) [the Alberta RPC] – [Task Identification Form \(TIF\) Report #1](#) – including a proposed planning document and a relief implementation plan. The relief date was based on the July 2018 relief numbering resource utilization forecast (R-NRUF) results, which indicated that the above-noted area codes would exhaust by March 2022.
3. In [Telecom Decision 2020-110](#), the Commission approved [TIF Report #2](#), in which the Alberta RPC recommended that the time period to start customer communications should be reduced from the current 12 months to 6 months before the relief implementation date in areas where mandatory 10-digit local dialing and a distributed overlay area code are already in place. Both are in place in Alberta.
4. The [report](#) on the July 2020 R-NRUF results, released by the Canadian Numbering Administrator on 17 September 2020, indicated that the forecasted exhaust date for area codes 403, 587, 780, and 825 had moved to November 2023.

TIF Report #3

5. On 26 November 2020, the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee (CISC) approved and forwarded to the Commission for its approval the Alberta RPC's [TIF](#)

¹ When an area code or area code complex runs out of assignable central office codes, a new area code is added to the geographical area served by the area code(s) that are expected to exhaust. Because it provides telephone numbers to the same geographical area, it is called a distributed overlay area code.

[Report #3](#), dated 26 October 2020, in which the Alberta RPC called for a change in the relief date for new distributed overlay area code 368 in Alberta.

6. Specifically, the Alberta RPC recommended that the relief date be postponed until 23 April 2022.

Changes to the relief implementation plan

7. TIF Report #3 included a revised relief implementation plan, which set out a revised relief implementation schedule that reflected the proposed revised relief date. The plan also included an updated consumer awareness program, an updated network implementation plan, and the individual telecommunications service providers' (TSPs) responsibilities.
8. The Alberta RPC noted that the current relief date of 15 May 2021 is 30 months ahead of the revised projected exhaust date and recommended that the implementation date be postponed to 23 April 2022. It also noted that the relief implementation plan schedule's activity dates were reviewed in accordance with the recommended revised relief implementation date.
9. Commensurate with the change in the relief date, updated activities include changes to TSPs' communications to customers and to operators of other telecommunications services,² timelines for the submission of the Alberta RPC's progress reports to the Commission, and network testing.
10. The Alberta RPC and CISC requested that the Commission approve TIF Report #3, including the revised relief implementation plan and relief implementation schedule.

Commission's analysis and determinations

11. Pursuant to section 8.19 of the [Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline](#) (the Guideline), the implementation date for a new area code should generally be 12 to 18 months prior to the projected exhaust date of the current area code(s). This lead time allows for a buffer for unexpected or unforecasted central office (CO) code demand to be met before the new area code is introduced. It also provides adequate time for all the changes that need to be made to accommodate the new area code.
12. The Alberta RPC has recommended that the new distributed overlay area code be implemented approximately 19 months ahead of the revised projected exhaust date of November 2023. This is one month ahead of the advance implementation period of 18 months set out in the Guideline. The Commission notes that the industry, by consensus, has agreed to this implementation time period. With this implementation time period, the industry has accepted that resource expenditures will be made sooner, rather than being delayed with a shorter implementation period. These expenditures should be minimal because this is the third distributed overlay area code in the

² These telecommunications services users include 9-1-1 public safety answering points, alarm companies, Internet service providers, and payphone providers.

province, and all the changes required to support such area codes have already been made to network and business support systems.

13. The Commission considers that an advantage of this lead time is that it provides a buffer to the volatility that has been seen in changing projected exhaust dates. If the exhaust date were to occur earlier in future forecasts, it could be absorbed within this implementation time period with minimal to no change in carriers' project plans. Further, this lead time will have no impact on consumers, because they will simply see another distributed overlay area code as the current area codes exhaust, which may occur at different times leading up to the last area code exhausting at the projected exhaust date.
14. The Commission therefore considers that it is reasonable to delay the introduction of the new distributed overlay area code until 23 April 2022, because this date is far enough ahead of the projected exhaust date to ensure an adequate supply of CO codes to carriers operating in Alberta. Further, there will be no adverse impacts on consumers with the new area code being introduced within the requested implementation time period.
15. In light of the above, the Commission **approves** the revised implementation date of 23 April 2022 for the new distributed overlay area code for Alberta. The Commission also **approves** the Alberta RPC's TIF Report #3, including the revised relief implementation plan and relief implementation schedule.

Policy Directions

16. In accordance with subparagraph 1(b)(1) of the 2006 Policy Direction,³ the Commission considers that approval of TIF Report #3 will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(f) of the *Telecommunications Act*.⁴
17. In accordance with the 2019 Policy Direction⁵, the Commission considers that this decision can promote competition, affordability, and consumer interests by allowing for the avoidance of inefficient expenditures that could result from the introduction of a new area code before it is required.

Secretary General

³ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006

⁴ The cited policy objective is 7(f) to foster increased reliance on market forces for the provision of telecommunications services and to ensure that regulation, where required, is efficient and effective.

⁵ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives to Promote Competition, Affordability, Consumer Interests and Innovation*, SOR/2019-227, 17 June 2019

Related documents

- *Revision to relief implementation schedule for area codes 403, 587, 780, and 825 in Alberta*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2020-110, 27 March 2020
- *Relief for area codes 403, 587, 780, and 825 in Alberta*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2019-130, 3 May 2019